



Standards & Assessment UPDATE

California Department of Education
Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

March 2006

Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program

Approval of Contract

The California Department of Education (CDE) released a Request for Submission (RFS) for the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program on July 11, 2005. The RFS included five of the six STAR Program tests:

- California Standards Tests (CSTs)
- California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA)
- National norm-referenced test (NRT)
- Standards-based Test in Spanish (STS)
- California Modified Assessment (CMA)

At the November 10, 2005, State Board of Education (SBE) meeting, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) recommended Educational Testing Services (ETS) as the contractor with California Achievement Tests, Sixth Education Survey (CAT/6) designated as the NRT. The SBE concurred with the recommendation. The CDE, Department of Finance, SBE, and ETS negotiated a contract that addressed the conditions set forth by SBE. The SBE approved the contract at the March 2006 SBE meeting. The contract will be effective through December 2009 (2006–07, 2007–08, and 2008–09 administrations) with the option to extend for two additional administrations (2009–2010 and 2010–2011).

CAPA Blueprints

The CAPA is designed to assess those students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the CSTs even with accommodations and modifications. The CAPA links directly to the California academic content standards. At the March 8, 2006, SBE meeting, the SBE approved the new CAPA blueprints. The blueprints were developed to reflect the portions of the content standards from kindergarten through high school that are accessible to students with significant cognitive disabilities. Skills assessed through this blueprint will allow children who take the CAPA to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. CAPA tasks will be field-tested in 2007 and are expected to be operational in 2008. The proposed CAPA blueprints may be found on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr06/agenda0306.asp>.

Performance Standards for Science

At the March 8, 2006, SBE meeting, the SBE approved performance standards (levels) for the Grade Eight CST in Science and the Grade Ten CST in Life Science and directed staff to conduct public hearings on the performance standards (levels). The public hearings will be conducted on March 29, 2006, at 10:00–11:00 a.m. at the Orange County Office of Education and at 1:00–2:00 p.m. at the Santa Clara County Office of Education. The last public hearing on the standards (levels) will be held at the May SBE meeting. The performance standards (levels) may be found on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/yr06/documents/bluemar06item05.doc>.

California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

Examination of Alternatives

At the March 8, 2006, SBE meeting, the SBE reviewed the information provided by the SSPI regarding the appropriateness of other criteria by which highly proficient students who are unable to pass the CAHSEE may demonstrate their competency to receive a high school diploma, pursuant to California Education Code Section 60856. The SBE agreed with Superintendent O'Connell's finding that no other criteria meet the specifications set forth in the statute and supported the recommendation that no alternative be forwarded to the California Legislature for enactment.

Adoption of Emergency Regulations

At the March 8, 2006, SBE meeting, the SBE adopted emergency regulations, which were effective on March 16, 2006. The emergency regulations permit eligible adult students (in kindergarten through grade 12 districts) to take the CAHSEE up to three times per school year and to take the exam in successive administrations, beginning in the 2006–07 school year. In addition, the emergency regulations specify the data that school districts are to submit to the CDE regarding the local waiver process for students with disabilities and the one-year exemption for students with disabilities in the class of 2006. The emergency regulations, which expire 120 days after they go into effect, may be found on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/rr/>.

The SBE also approved the commencement of the rulemaking process for proposed regulations to make the emergency regulations a permanent part of the CAHSEE regulations. The 45-day public review period for the regulations began on March 17, and the CDE will hear public comments on the regulations at a public hearing scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on May 3, 2006, at 1430 N Street, Room 1101, Sacramento.

Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook

At the March 9, 2006, SBE meeting, the SBE approved changes to the 2006 Accountability Workbook which will be provided to the United States

Department of Education for review by April 2006. Of the six changes to the workbook that were outlined to the SBE, one directly involved the CAHSEE. The use of a calculator on the mathematics part of the CAHSEE is considered a test modification. Proposed federal regulations would require that students who use a test modification not be included in the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure. Because the use of a calculator is the most often used test modification on the CAHSEE, the CDE is proposing a solution that would include these students in the AYP. The solution is outlined in the workbook and would require that grade ten students with disabilities who use a calculator on the mathematics part of the CAHSEE attain higher cut-scores to be considered proficient or advanced for purposes of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). (This is in order to compensate for the calculator sensitive items on the CAHSEE.) Students who fall into this category will be considered as participants in the high school mathematics assessment for purposes of NCLB. This new higher-cut score would be used for accountability purposes only and does not affect the student's score in any way.

California English Language Development Test (CELDT)

Performance Level Standard Setting

At the March 9, 2006, SBE meeting, the SBE approved new performance level standard cut-points for the CELDT. Updated cut-points were needed to respond to the No Child Left Behind requirement to report additional scores for purposes of Title III accountability. In addition, updating the performance level cut-points will incorporate the significant changes in the design of the CELDT that were implemented to streamline the test and reduce the burden on school districts. The updated cut-points will be implemented in Form F for the 2006–07 school year, using a new common scale for the CELDT that is designed to improve reporting of results. Training materials that incorporate the updated cut-points will be distributed to school district personnel who attend workshops beginning in April 2006.

More information...

For more information about any of the mentioned SBE items, access the SBE agenda on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/ag/ag/>.